



Player Development Strategy

Travel Hockey Program

Membership Presentation

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Introduction Background

- The Winnetka Hockey Club (WHC) and the Winfield Hockey Club (WFHC) have operated for years without a clear, well-defined set of objectives and execution plan for player development.
- The Clubs now have 800 players and supplies the New Trier program with a majority of their players, a significant increase/contrast to prior years. Other WHC players also play at Loyola, Lake Forest Academy, and other clubs.
- Any determination regarding the future and direction of player development requires a thorough assessment of how it should be approached, executed and measured over time.

Approach

- A 'task force' chaired by WHC President- and including the Travel Director, and staff (Hockey and Administrative Director)
- This task force analyzed several programs to develop a "best practice" approach to player development and adapted this program to the clubs based upon available resources.
- The task force shared their initial recommendations with a broader panel of club Board Members for general feedback and insight.
- The task force leveraged the panel's feedback to construct a final recommendation to the WHC Board for approval.

Introduction Overview

The “Player Development Strategy” (“PDS”) was collaboratively designed to establish the following critical elements of a successful, working plan to elevate and continuously improve player growth and development:

1. *A mission statement and clear objective;*
2. *A prioritized set of goals and ‘success measures’;*
3. *A framework for player development;*
4. *An implementation/execution plan; and*
5. *A suitable organizational structure.*

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the largest programs in the state with a strong House League and opportunities at all levels of skill. • Strong belief/support in the community based model. • Many long-standing, well respected coaches that provides consistency from year to year/team to team. • Loyalty to our constituency: we are not a “win at all costs” program. • Hockey culture within the communities. • Internal development: we replace players primarily from within the organization. • Solidified skills program under Wayne Brown and Stu Gould and strong financial support to the skills program. • Stability. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice time shortage to provide all teams the ice perceived to compete at the highest levels. • Losing high-end players to other Tier 2 programs. • High fees. • There is no clear strategy/approach to player development: more of a “wing it” or each coach has their own strategy. • Dryland training: do people want it or is it too much? • Player buy-in of the skills session: too many kids do not take it seriously and diminish the experience for everyone. • As a community-based clubs, we lose players but do not pick up players. • We are competitively, a good club: how do we become a great club? • Some coaches are either system oriented, or do not have a plan for practice sessions.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have provided the financial resources to skill development for both goalies and skaters: how do we best utilize those resources? • Growing the entry level programs at the Mite level: how do we get more children from “Learn to skate” into the House programs? • Summer programming: should we offer what many other programs do? • Coaching collaboritives • We have many club members with unique skill sets: how do we utilize their experiences to make the club stronger? 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With no defined strategy or direction for player development, the club risks confusion and misinterpretation of the player development philosophy. • Poor attitudes of a few players ruin the experience for all team members. • How do we monitor every coach to ensure they are playing kids relatively equally? Does this undermine their ability to coach/win? • Changing demographics in the community: what will happen if the Clubs loses membership due to lower school enrollment?

Mission Statement & Objective

• The PDS's 'mission' is to specifically address the relevant elements (underlined below) of the Club's overall mission statement:

"To teach the children of Winnetka and surrounding communities the sport of ice hockey and to develop team and individual skills through both recreational and competitive play while emphasizing sportsmanship, cooperation, self-discipline, individual responsibility, and respect for others, to provide the best possible experience for all participants."

• Development/improvement- including the ability to effectively "compete" - is more important than winning.

• General "youth athletic experience" is more important than focusing primarily on upper-level teams/players.

NOTE: If we excel at development/improvement and experience then 'winning' and successful HS teams will be a natural by-product.

• We will seek to establish a distinct "culture" and a sense of "tradition" that highlights our development approach and success.

The PDS will establish a well-defined plan and set of guidelines to drive:

- Continuous improvement of hockey and life skills.
- A rewarding and enjoyable athletic experience.
- A high-level of competitive performance.

The following in a positive, disciplined environment for ALL players at ALL levels.

Prioritized Goals

- Prioritized goals will be categorized to ensure appropriate emphasis and assessment of the key components of our stated objective:
 - Continuous improvement (Ex.: parent/player feedback favorability; 1st half vs. 2nd half results, etc.); and
 - Rewarding experience (Ex.: retention goals; parent/player feedback favorability, etc.)
 - Highly competitive performance (Ex.: overall wins/losses; region/state tourney appearances, etc.)

NOTE: Limit of 2-5 goals for each category

- The review of goals – and the specific results - at the end of the season will form the basis for the “Development Action Plan” that is created before the start of the next season.
- The desire is to have ‘baseline metrics’ remain constant over time, but periodic review of these metrics will be conducted to assess potential opportunities for improved measurement.
- While “Prioritized Goals” will form the primary measure of success for the Clubs’ overall strategy, we will not limit our measurement efforts to only those metrics, but instead seek to develop additional metrics that shed further light on Club successes and opportunities.
- Where possible and/or appropriate, the Clubs should tag ALL measures/metrics with critical attributes such as level, timeframe, position, game-type, etc.
- The Director of the PDS committee and the Hockey Director will collaborate with the Club Administrative Director to electronically capture and store all metrics for a given year.

Development Framework

- The Clubs will construct and maintain a framework for player development that highlights our approach and provides the following benefits:

- Helps communicate an approach/direction for the development process;

- Useful guide for coaches, players and parents to understand level-specific priorities; and

- Aligns the Club with key governing bodies (ex. AHAI & USA Hockey) and industry-leading research.

- The model will leverage and align with USA Hockey's "American Development Model" (ADM - <http://www.admkids.com/>) and other renowned reference points (Ex. Hockey Canada -

- http://www.hockeycanada.ca/index.php/ci_id/22107/la_id/1.htm)

- Framework will be 'directional' in nature and incorporated into the Execution plan

- **Primary focus by level:**

- "Development" at the Squirt/U10 and under levels

- "Competition" at the Bantam/U14 levels

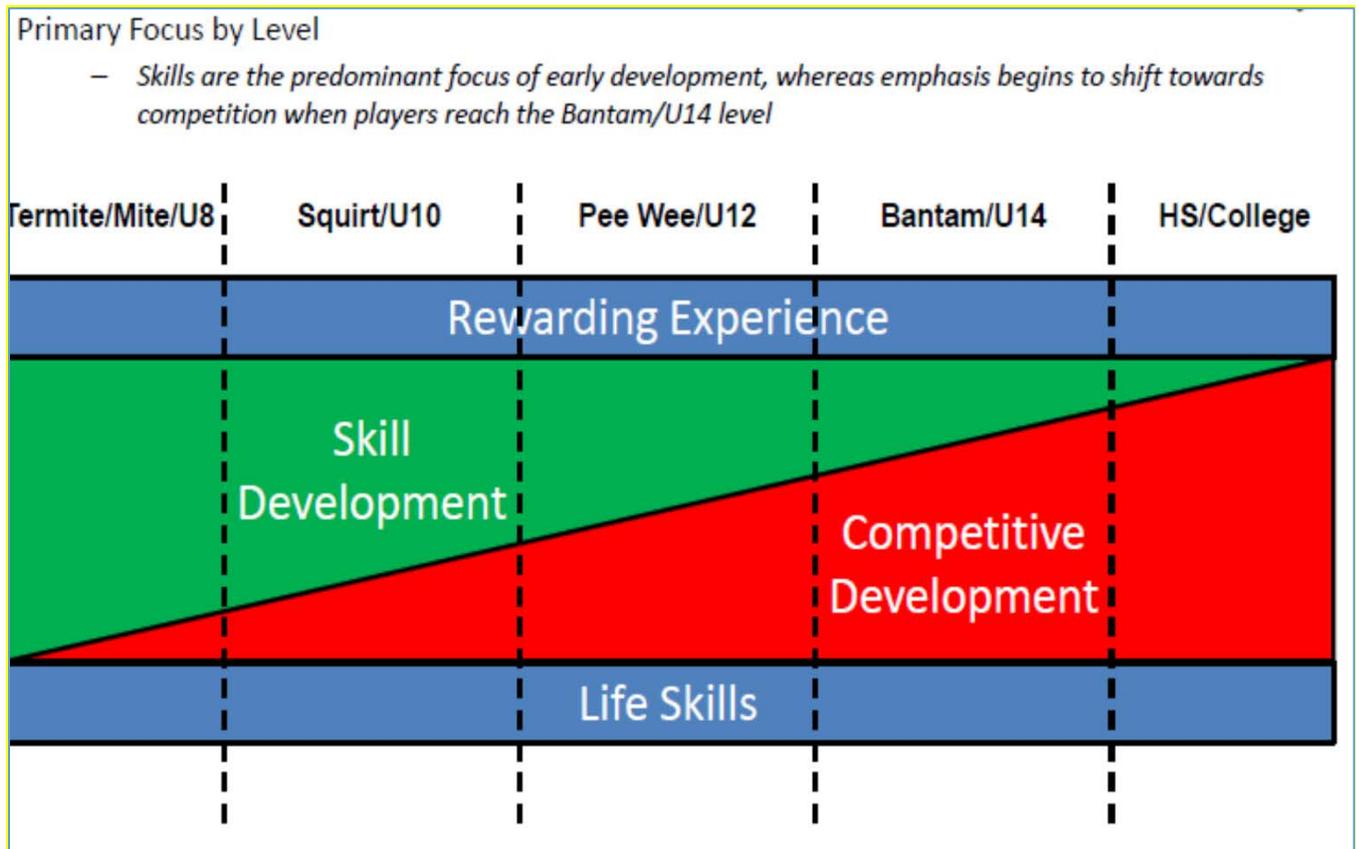
- Balance of both "Development" and "Competition" at the Pee Wee/U12 levels

**See next slide for graphic depiction*

Primary Focus by Level

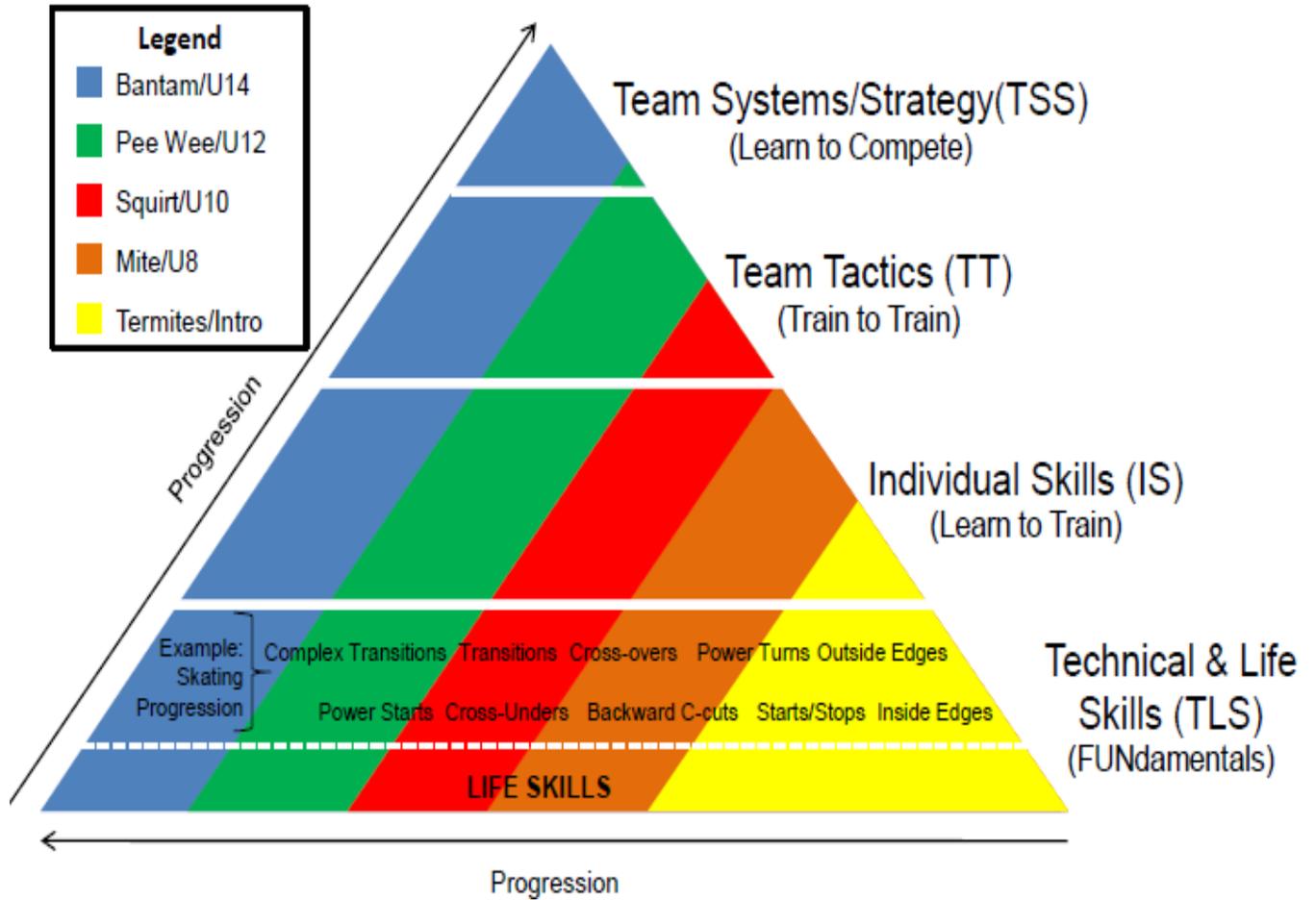
-Skills are the predominant focus of early development, whereas emphasis begins to shift towards competition when players reach the Bantam/U14 level.

Development Framework: Focus



Development Framework: Model

The Clubs will look to build out this model over time:



Implementation/Execution Plan

- Coaching guidelines – and mandates – will be necessary to insure successful development for ALL kids.
 - The Club will seek to insure that reasonable, minimum levels of growth, development and positive experience are achieved in all settings. To that end, some critical components will be mandated and/or audited accordingly, as well as assessed/reviewed annually based on most recent performance and impact.
 - Guidelines and mandates will be aligned with the ‘Development Framework’ and more prevalent at the introductory levels – ex. Mites/Squirts – where there is a greater need for consistent execution

- **The Clubs will adopt a “Player Development Charter” consisting of the following policies:**
 - Fair Play Policy**
 - A modified version of “Equal Play” that clarifies for coaches, players and parents the appropriate execution of fair play (ex. Rolling lines vs. playing to win, goalie rotation, etc.)

 - Event Frequency Policy**
 - A policy that defines how often players should be engaged in club-related hockey activities at various levels. This is to insure that time commitments at all levels are reasonable and support family, school and/or other activities.

 - Annual “Coaching Contract”**
 - A signed contract that emphasizes adherence to the above-mentioned policies and relevant guidelines.

 - “Code of Conduct” for each of Players and Parents**
 - Appropriate guidelines/rules for conduct specific to the primary club constituents.

Implementation/Execution Plan

- The Clubs will strive to maintain strong working relationships with ALL high school programs (Loyola/New Trier).
- The Clubs will seek to leverage any/all financially-viable training resources – including private/outside providers – to achieve a high-value, development curriculum
 - Utilizing a variety of training options (ex. External experts, HS coaches, Clubs’ coaches, etc.) exposes the players and coaches to different training techniques and also gives the Club an opportunity to acquire feedback on the various trainers themselves. Over time, those that do well will be retained and perhaps expanded, while those who don’t perform well may be replaced.
- The Clubs will seek to elevate Dryland training - specifically “athletic training” - at the U12/U14 levels.
 - Off-ice athletic training focused on balance, agility, ‘core’, power, speed, etc. enables the Club to develop foundational, athletic skills recommended in the “Long-Term Athlete Development” (LTAD) model – the primary basis for USA Hockey’s American Development Model
 - LINK: <http://www.admkids.com/longTermDevelopment.php>
 - The WHC will work to secure convenient, sufficient space close to ice in an effort to address this key development component. This will enable the training to coincide with regular practice times and not add additional days/nights to an already-demanding schedule
- We will strive to learn all we can from the successes – and failures – of other clubs:
 - We will continually monitor the activities of top-performing clubs and seek to learn as much as possible

Organizational Structure

- The Player Development Strategy will be:
 - supported by a structure that incorporates a diverse set of hockey-related ideas and experiences;
 - enables the objectives and goals of the strategy to be met; and
 - ensures accountability for measurement, feedback and continuous improvement.
- In addition to hockey-related experience (playing, coaching, etc.), the Club will also seek out the following traits when considering candidates for key roles:
 - Advanced and/or youth coaching experience in any/all sports
 - Teaching and/or other youth development expertise
 - A creative and collaborative approach to leadership
- The Club will seek to adopt a more open and thorough application/selection process for key roles but, where/when necessary, recruit capable members and confirm via Board approval
- Key committee will consist of roughly 5-7 members to support varied opinion while also enabling reasonable ratification of recommendations
 - PDS Director will set agendas and drive progress, but their opinions/suggestions will carry the same weight as other committee members
 - The committee is directly responsible for the collection and analysis of any/all metrics that speak specifically to that committee's goals/objectives
- A "Hockey Advisory Panel" consisting of coaches and other external experts will meet periodically to review committee recommendations and provide insight/opinion

Organizational Structure: Player Development Committee

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Winnetka/Winfield Hockey Club
Board of Directors

Player Development Committee

Seven member committee consisting of Hockey Director, three knowledgeable Board members, and three coaches.

Next Steps

While this approved strategy document establishes the foundation for Player Development moving forward, additional work is necessary to insure successful implementation and future progress. This work includes – but is not limited to – the following steps:

- Communicate the “Player Development Strategy” to the general membership
- Recruit for key roles and committee positions to erect approved organizational structure
- Educate and train coaches and players on the key policies, guidelines, etc.
- Finalization of the ‘Prioritized Goals’
- Continued development of the ‘Development Framework” at each level
- Completion of the development plan for the upcoming season